



## **SFO National Peace and Justice Commission**

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### **We Celebrate the Apostolates of Our Fraternities**

To read of the fraternity apostolates described in this newsletter is to read of Secular Franciscans living the Gospel. Matthew 25 comes alive in their actions. The writers do not go into great detail about the prayer and contemplation that is the basis for all that they do. The results speak for themselves. Truly, these fraternity members have “set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.” (*Rule XII*)

The apostolates described here are apostolates shared by all, or almost all, of the members of the fraternity. The idea of what to do and the decision to participate was made by the fraternity members. That is quite appropriate because the local fraternity is “the privileged place for developing a sense of Church and the Franciscan vocation and for enlivening the apostolic life of its members.” (*Rule XXII*)

Fraternities that work together on a common apostolate receive many benefits. The discussion that precedes the selection of the apostolate is a benefit in itself. When a decision is made, the plan of action is devised by the fraternity. Even before anything is done, members are in contact with one another. The actions undertaken bring members together in new ways. New friendships are formed and old ones deepened. Everyone’s understanding of Franciscan spirituality is enlarged. Fraternities with a common apostolate are truly fortunate.

In some of the situations described in this newsletter several fraternities participate. In some cases, other individuals or groups have been brought into the action along with the Secular Franciscans. It is the kind of participation that enriches the lives of all.

We hope that you will find the descriptions of fraternity members working together on apostolates interesting and informative. Peace and justice is an enormously broad area. Not everyone agrees about what it should include or exclude. However, when fraternity members decide together on an apostolate and put it into action, as these Secular Franciscans have done, our understanding of peace and justice is revealed as life-affirming situations in which fraternity members go from Gospel to life.

Carolyn Colburn, sfo

National Peace and Justice Commission, Chair

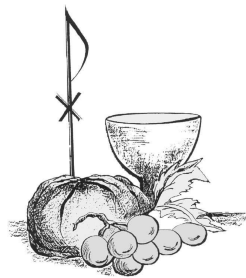
**Holy Spirit Fraternity** in Sharon, Pennsylvania, gives a yearly Franciscan Peace Award to the eighth grade student in each of four local Catholic Elementary Schools who best exemplifies the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. The **Holy Spirit Fraternity Peace Award** consists of a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond, a certificate, a Franciscan peace medallion on a chord, a paperback book, *Francis of Assisi: The Song Goes On* by Hugh Noonan, OFM and Roy M. Gasnick, OFM, a Franciscan Love You “Hug” card, and a letter of congratulations. The purpose of the award is to underscore conciliation, peacemaking and respect for others.

When the idea was first proposed to the fraternity, there was concern about where the money would come from. The Lord wanted the event to be sponsored, and the money was found. Four members of **Holy Spirit Fraternity** each donated \$1000 that was put in a certificate of deposit. The next step was to contact the schools. The proposal was well received by the pastors and principals. The faculty, staff, and administration in each school vote for the student who will receive the award.

The yearly Franciscan Peace Award is given to four students, one in each school, when the elementary schools gather for a Mass and Communion breakfast to celebrate their Catholic identity. The awards began in February 2000. All of the members of **Holy Spirit Fraternity** attend the breakfast as guests, along with parents, teachers, and pastors. The proud and excited recipients are asked to take their peace-loving ways with them into their high school, college, the market place, and the world at large.

To assure the continuation of the awards, **Holy Spirit Fraternity** has designed and sold memorial cards. Some years they have not had to touch the reserve money because they had enough in the memorial card fund for the awards. To date twenty-four students have been honored. A beautiful mahogany plaque hangs in each school with a brass nameplate that reads, **Franciscan Peace Award—Holy Spirit Fraternity—Secular Franciscan Order**. The local papers are generous with publicity. Three newspapers run photos and carry an article. There are individual interviews for the respective church newspapers or bulletins. Two other fraternities in Lady Poverty Region have joined in and establish a peace award in their locality.

Source: **Patricia Mulligan, SFO**



**St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity** in Cincinnati, Ohio, members believe that peace education must begin at an early age. Peace can be encouraged by providing safe non-military toys to children. After various announcements in its local fraternity newsletter and in the regional newsletter, *The Trinity Trumpet*, fraternity members brought gifts of safe non-military toys to the fraternity meeting. The toys were delivered and distributed to disabled children at Saint Joseph’s Orphanage and St. Aloysius Orphanage of Cincinnati. Secular Franciscans of **St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity** were provided with refreshments and gifts of religious candles at the gathering. The result was that disabled children of two of the area’s orphanages have toys that will not lead to aggressive behavior. The toys will encourage a healthy perspective on peace as an alternative to violence.

Source: **Marvin Dickman, SFO; Leland Schneider, SFO**

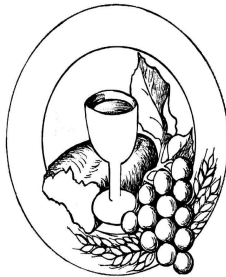
**St. Catherine Fraternity, St. Margaret of Cortona Fraternity, and Our Lady of the Presentation Fraternity** of Cincinnati, Ohio, participate in the Peace and Justice, “Prayer Vigils for Life,” of Helpers of God’s Precious Infants. The vigils are scheduled on the second and fourth Saturday of every month. Fraternity members attend Mass and Eucharist Adoration at Holy Name Church in Cincinnati. They pray the rosary in the Rosary Procession to the nearby Mt. Auburn abortion facility. All of the Secular Franciscans in Holy Trinity were invited to participate in the “Prayer Vigils for Life” through the *Secular Franciscan Order’s Holy Trinity Region’s Peace and Justice Commission Newsletter*. E-mails and other alerts increased Secular Franciscan participation, along with hundreds of others, in praying and showing their support for the unborn infants and their right to life. Fraternity members are living the Gospel teaching, “Can you not watch one hour with me?” (Mt. 26:40)

Source: **Don Lipps, SFO; Marvin Dickman, SFO; Leland Schneider, SFO**

**Greccio Fraternity** in Derry, New Hampshire has a great talent for feeding the masses. **Greccio Fraternity** members have cooked for HIV/AIDS victims, participated in the Community Soup Kitchen, and fed the youth during their Teen Encounter weekends.

One of **Greccio Fraternity** favorite activities is the Racetrack Ministry at Rockingham Racetrack in Salem, New Hampshire. At least once every summer **Greccio Fraternity** members get together to prepare and serve a full meal for itinerant workers and their families. Last year they were able to serve a whole Thanksgiving meal in the middle of August. What a treat! Meals are planned for 70 to 90 people. The workers not only enjoy the food, but they also enjoy our friendship. We chat with them—even though some of them don’t speak English well—they understand the universal language of LOVE. Prayer is offered before the meal, and then we “preach” through actions and not words.

Source: **Susan Ronan, SFO**



**The Brother Jacoba Community of St. Peter’s in the Loop** is in Chicago, Illinois. In conjunction with St. Peter’s Church, the **Brother Jacoba Community** sponsored a month-long collection of items for the US soldiers in Iraq. It took place from October 11 to November 11 of 2004. The response was very heartening. We ended up taking three loads of items to Great Lakes Navel Training Station. The items were turned over to the USO for shipping and distribution to the troops. In addition to having a story in St. Peter’s Bulletin and a follow-up thank-you afterwards, the collection was mentioned in the **NEW WORLD**, the archdiocesan newspaper.

Source: **M. Marko, SFO**

**Padre Pio Fraternity** in Columbus, Ohio, decided to clean the Holy Family Soup Kitchen in Columbus, Ohio. They recruited volunteers, gathered cleaning supplies, and meshed their schedules with the soup kitchen. This gracious Franciscan Peace and Justice action of **Padre Pio Fraternity** made possible better preparation of nutritious food for the area's hungry. Fraternity members are living the Peace and Justice Gospel values, as lived by St. Francis of Assisi.

Sources: *The Trinity Trumpet*, **Dennis Frosting, SFO**, Editor, and **Regina Cano, SFO**



**St. Boniface Fraternity** in Louisville, Kentucky, has a fraternity apostolate: serving the Harbor Lights Community of Louisville. The Harbor Lights Community consists of St. Francis Inn, the Dorothy Day House of Hospitality, and St. Clare's Place. Following much preparatory work, the Secular Franciscans of **St. Boniface Fraternity** helped build the Dorothy Day House of Hospitality. They organized its facilities and developed its newsletter. According to **St. Boniface Fraternity** Spiritual Assistant, **Deacon Tom McCulloch**, it is a "three-quarter" way house where released prisoners can stay up to two years, allowing them to find a job, accumulate household supplies, and get established back into society.

Members of **St. Boniface Fraternity** helped organize other volunteer groups for the Harbor Light Community to provide a chapel, library and a prayer garden. Thanks to the efforts of the Secular Franciscans of **St. Boniface Fraternity** the homeless now have a bath and showers, laundry facilities, a private locker area, and a soup and sandwich kitchen for anyone in need of a meal.

**Michele Bline, SFO**, an editor of *Harbor Light Community of Louisville* newsletter wrote that in performing these Franciscan peace and justice actions, the members of **St. Boniface Fraternity** live their peace and justice beliefs: "To be our brothers' keeper is what God wants us to do. To clothe the naked at a personal sacrifice is what God wants us to do. To shelter the homeless is what God wants us to do. To instruct the ignorant at a personal sacrifice is what God wants us to do. To serve."

Source: **Michele Bline, SFO**

**Our Lady of Angels Fraternity**, in Cincinnati, Ohio, has chosen as an apostolate to provide a monthly meal to residents of Tender Mercies. Tender Mercies is a residential facility for persons with mental illness located in the "Over the Rhine" neighborhood near the downtown business district of Cincinnati. Members of **Our Lady of Angels Fraternity** prepare food, recruit volunteers, and plan prayers in preparation for the monthly meal service. Residents of Tender Mercies receive a free monthly meal in a Franciscan caring environment from Secular Franciscan members of **Our Lady of Angels Fraternity** who are following their Franciscan Peace and Justice Gospel beliefs.

Source: **Anita Bidleman, SFO**

Art work is by the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany <http://www.alleganyart.com/graphics.html>

**Little Portion Fraternity** of Fort Thomas, Kentucky, has chosen food drives as an apostolate. In preparation for the drive, announcements are put in parish bulletins, the newsletter of **Little Portion Fraternity**, and other publications. Secular Franciscans locate volunteers and food for the events. As a result of the actions of members of **Little Portion Fraternity**, generous food donations are provided to worthwhile Northern Kentucky area charitable organizations.

In addition to this apostolate in Kentucky, members of **Little Portion Fraternity** were inspired by several local Peace and Justice Prayer Programs and discussions to donate to the care of lepers through Amazon Relief. They have adopted a family in India who now receive better care and nutrition. All of these apostolates are a following of the various Franciscan values and Gospel beliefs of the Secular Franciscans of **Little Portion Fraternity**.

Source: **Rose Mary Menetrey, SFO**



**The New Pentecost Fraternity** in Dix Hills, New York has been serving the homeless of New York City for over ten years. For the last seven years members of **The New Pentecost Fraternity** have been going to New York the first Saturday of each month to serve the men at the Bellevue Hospital Shelter. Fraternity members give out bag lunches, new underwear, religious articles, and lots of good cheer. Parishioners, young and old, are invited to come along.

These men might never hear a nice word or experience a loving greeting. To see the look in their eyes and to have them return "God bless you, too," lights up the lives of fraternity members.

The group leaves about ten thirty in the morning from St. Matthew Church in Dix Hill and returns about two in the afternoon. All Secular Franciscans in the area are welcome to join members of **New Pentecost Fraternity** at any time.

Source: **Frank Harnos**

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**St. Francis Fraternity** in San Francisco, California, runs the Living Room Program for Seniors in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco. The program operates for 9 AM to 4 PM on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Sixty to ninety people are served breakfast. The seniors have an appropriate exercise program. They receive help with social service. Young people from schools in the area come by to talk to them. The seniors have recreation with movies, bingo and art activities. They have the opportunity to learn crocheting and computers. They get help with letter writing. The seniors will have the opportunity to do Scripture study and be in spiritual discussion groups.

When the program started **St. Francis Fraternity** invited other fraternities in the area to participate in this ministry to the poor. They asked for art supplies, peanut butter and canned fruit to be contributed by other Secular Franciscan fraternities. Other fraternities responded making this a multiple Secular Franciscan fraternity apostolate.

Source: **Christine Morrison, SFO**



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**Francis of Assisi Fraternity** in Jersey City, New Jersey, wanted to do something for the poor residents of Camden, New Jersey, the city known as the most dangerous city in our nation. Add in the presence of HIV or full blown AIDS in a person or a loved one, and you have modern day lepers. In 1996 a group of Secular Franciscans established Francis House. It is an outreach community creating a place where two days a week persons affected by the HIV virus can come together for companionship and friendship. **Susan Pilara, SFO**, who continues to direct Francis House, is sure to make prayer a part of the program, thus building an atmosphere of hope and peace for those whose lives are so full of pain.

Shortly after Francis House was established, **St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity** began to offer the clients a day at the beach. **St. Francis Fraternity** meets on an island that is a very popular summer resort serving New York City, Philadelphia and places in between. It is about a two hour drive from Camden. One Tuesday in August each year a group from Francis House leaves Camden for Long Beach Island, New Jersey. We greet our guests at St. Francis Community Center and serve them a light breakfast. Refreshed from their trip, they head to the beach just two blocks away. Many are afraid of the surf, so they don't go in the water. Long Beach Township allows our guests to use the beach without the required badges. For some it is their first view of the ocean.

When they return to the Center, lunch is ready. We join in a prayer circle for spontaneous grace before meals. Listening to the blessings and praise of these humble people is a lesson for all of us who are privileged to be a part of this day. After lunch our guests use our outdoor heated pool, which many enjoy much more than the sea. About three PM, tired and relaxed, our guests pack up for the trip home. They always promise to come back next year. The gratitude expressed for such a simple small gift is awesome. Those of us who live here look on our surroundings with new eyes.

Source: **Pat Simmons, SFO**

An article by **Patti Normile, SFO** Our Lady of Angels Fraternity Holy Trinity Region

Several weeks ago Marvin Dickman asked if I would write something on peace and justice for the *Trinity Trumpet*. I said I would when I thought of something to write. I thought and I thought.....and I thought. One thought that kept coming to mind was what a director at the former St. Francis Center for Peace and Renewal had said about organizing retreats and days of reflection. It went something like, "Call it anything like 'Peace and Justice' and no one will come." Indeed, such days or weekends drew few takers. We wondered why, especially when the Christian/Franciscan mission is to bring peace in the world. Perhaps the resistance to such programs is that they tend to do the *talking* and avoid the *walking* in the way of creating peace and justice in the world.

At Sunday Mass a couple of weeks ago, I found a topic for a brief article on peace and justice at St. Andrew Church in Milford, Ohio. As I knelt before Mass, I noticed a man approach the altar, talk with Deacon Tim and then sit in the front pew. I didn't get a full face view of him but something kept telling me I knew him. Sure enough it was announced that Roy Wilmhoff would be speaking on his mission work.

Roy is one of our own, a Secular Franciscan from Holy Trinity region who, after completing the Lay Ministry Program, felt a spiritual call to do something more. He began searching for a place where he might serve the cause of justice and peace. Many opportunities were designed for students or those who had just graduated from college. They did not fit Roy. Then an online search resulted in Roy linking with a ministry in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada. A native of northern Kentucky, Roy quit his job and headed north last year.

Roy's talk that Sunday morning was a moving message. I looked around to see how engrossed people were with what he had to say. They were interested because Roy was telling about what was being done to help the poor through *Kateri House* ministry. And he wasn't just talking, he is a part of the doing.

*Kateri's Companions in Ministry, Inc.* is a lay mission association serving First Nations communities, Canadian aboriginal people. Founders Pat Grise and Waltera Van Gennip have been doing mission work among these people since 1975. *Kateri's Companions in Ministry* was founded in 1986. *Kateri House, Sturgeon Lake Pastoral Care, Mistawasis Catechetical Training, Second Harvest Circle, Cross-cultural Missionary Training* are the varied aspects of the ministry. The mission: ...*one of hope and healing. We are called to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ with practical persevering love.*

Much of Roy's work involves work with ex-offenders and substance addicted individuals. He also works with *Second Harvest Circle* which provided emergency assistance to those needing food, clothing or household goods. Over 1000 families are served. The circle of care consists of those who need, those who give and those who volunteer.

If you would like to learn more about *Kateri House* and the various ministries, you can check their website: [www.katerihouse.com](http://www.katerihouse.com) or send an e-mail to Roy at [rcwsfo@yahoo.com](mailto:rcwsfo@yahoo.com) or call 306-764-4126. The ministry relies on contributions to support those in need. One of our own is not just talking about peace and justice, he is walking with those in need, making a difference in the world of justice and peace.

Patti Normile, SFO

Our Lady of the Angels Fraternity

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